

International Frozen Food Corporation

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GSP Subcommittee
Trade Policy Staff Committee
Office of the United States Trade Representative
USTR Annex
Room F-220
1724 F Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Re: Generalized System of Preferences(GSP) Docket Number USTR 2017-0014

I write in my capacity as President of International Frozen Food Corp., an importer of fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, in order to express my support for the reinstatement of Argentina to the GSP program.

Prior to Argentina's being delisted from GSP status, the U.S. was its main export market for frozen strawberries, with a volume of 20 to 25 million pounds per year. Since Argentina's delisting in 2012, its volume of frozen strawberry exports to the U.S. has dropped to around 2 to 2.5 million pounds a year. Previous to 2012, our company's volume of frozen strawberry imports from Argentina was between 4 and 7 million pounds per year. In 2012, as a result of Argentina losing the benefits of GSP status, our volume of strawberry imports was reduced to approximately 200,000 pounds and has remained as such.

By comparison, frozen strawberries from other countries (such as, Chile, Peru, Egypt and Mexico) have duty-free access to the U.S. market. The quality of Argentina's frozen strawberries is well regarded in the industry. Our loss of market share is a direct effect of the 11.2% import duty. Compared to the 0% duty on imported strawberries from these other countries, the high duty imposed on Argentina's strawberry imports has resulted in a competitive disadvantage due to higher cost.

Our customers prefer frozen strawberries from Argentina, which have been a reliable import strawberry for many years. Reinstating Argentina's GSP status will allow us to offer this product once again at a level cost basis. This will give us an excellent opportunity to regain lost market share. Again, the reinstatement of Argentina to GSP status would make it, once again, a strong competitor alongside other developing markets.

Thank you for consideration.

Sincerely,

Jorge Basile

Jorge Basile
President